

Des seind der Schmeichler also viel
Der keiner Wahrheit reden will,

Dass es leider ist eine Schand,
Dass Lügen voll seind alle Land.* . .

So much deceit is spread about
That none the truth now dares speak
out.

'Tis, certes, pitiful to see
That liars everywhere should be. . .

Lügen! (lies!) that is the terrible cry of the 16th century. Dr. Murner calls Dr. Luther a liar, and Dr. Luther calls Dr. Murner a liar. Each roars for the very disquietness of his heart. Well might the perplexed public, listening to the doctors, ask of their own hearts sadly and solemnly the question asked by jesting Pilate, *what is truth?* That question, swelling to a cry, taken up by all the nations of the North, underlies the unrest that marked this time.

Questions to be answered by Club Students:—

(First Class Paper.)

Write your views on Luther in German.

(Second Class Paper.)

Write your views on Luther in English.

(Honour Papers.)

Miss Dixon, the Misses Margaret and Mary Lloyd, Miss Maud Lloyd (translation very witty and clever), Miss Gates (a quite brilliant translation).

Books recommended for study:—

Luther's German Bible.

* Somewhat modernised.

THOUGHTS ON CLASSICAL EDUCATION.

BY J. S. MILLS, M.A.

II.

In my short article upon this subject in the August number of the *Parents' Review* I confined myself to a discussion of the position I thought appropriate to classical study relatively to other subjects of school education. I desired to transfer from classical sides numbers of boys who can be expected to derive no sort of culture from their classical studies, and I suggested that such boys need not necessarily be the dunces of the school, but might find ample scope in modern subjects for the exercise of respectable abilities. I assumed, however, that the school education of such boys would generally cease at the age of seventeen or eighteen. It has been suggested to me that I have not considered the case of a boy who feels no ability or desire for classical study, and yet intends to proceed to the University on the strength of an exclusively modern education. How is he to pay the classical toll, cross the *pons asinorum* at the entrance of the old Universities in the shape of compulsory "little-go" Greek?* A Modern Language Tripos has been established; but the road to that, as to every other, passes through the strait gate of the Greek grammar. To teachers who think, as I, that modern languages confer a high degree of culture and form a rational province of University training, an opinion endorsed by the University of Cambridge in the establishment of a Modern Language Tripos, the classical entrance test is a serious hindrance and discouragement. Latin is taught on many modern sides: public examinations—military, legal, medical—enforce it. Greek, however, is never taught there. Any boy, therefore who proposes to go to the University with

* For convenience I confine myself to the case of the University of Cambridge. I have mentioned later a difference between the cases of the two Universities on this question.

a view to the Modern Language Tripos must interrupt seriously his modern curriculum by the exacting study of Greek, or must rely upon the dishonourable and injurious process of cram to scrape through his Previous Examination. The Universities have recognised the modern studies; let them be recognised then without this crippling qualification. As yet I have known only a few boys pass to the Universities from modern sides. A case, however, as I have said, has been lately brought under my notice; and as modern sides increase in efficiency and self-esteem, the Modern Language Tripos will become more and more popular. What, then, is the justification of compulsory Greek? *A priori* it seems absurd that the Classical Tripos, one only of many collateral examinations, should impose a knowledge of its own subject upon candidates for all the others. It would seem as reasonable or unreasonable that a classical man should be compelled to know a little science, as the scientific man to know a little Greek. The mathematics required of all candidates for the Previous forms a different case, the subject being taught up to the standard of the Previous in both departments of our public schools, and involving, therefore, no interruption to the candidate for any other Tripos. A little time ago, however, the Mathematical Tripos was open to the same charge as that which I am now preferring against the Classical. The Classical man was annoyed, and indeed often foiled, by the compulsory requirement of higher Algebra, Mechanics, and Trigonometry embodied in what was known as the "additional," for which now, very justly, French or German is accepted as an alternative. Compulsory Greek stands in a very similar position to the old "additional," and demands a similar reform.

I am not, however, so entirely a Philistine as to think that no literary culture should be demanded as the initial qualification for a University degree in any subject. I cannot in fact throw off some natural regret at the prospect of University graduates without so much as a knowledge of the Greek alphabet. Greek has been hitherto a common bond among us: however far we have diverged into the uttermost parts of other subjects, our orbits have coincided at this point. We must, however, candidly confess that the amount of Greek compulsorily demanded at Cambridge, while being a serious hindrance and an unprofitable burden to many Tripos men, is scarcely

worth retaining. Previous Greek, got up with infinite disgust and labour in many cases, is promptly forgotten and leaves "not a rack behind." The tale is often told of the freshman who had so carefully compared the Greek text with its translation that he thought he would be able to "spot" the beginning and end of any passage that could be set, but he unfortunately betrayed himself by giving several more lines of English translation than there was Greek text for. Such a man derives as much culture from his "little-go" Greek as from his Paley's ghost with its eleven allegations.

We do not demand, then, the abolition of some literary test at the outset of the University course: we ask that it should be so remodelled as not to arbitrarily vex and hamper or even exclude entirely classes of students, becoming yearly more numerous, whose subjects are fully recognised as of independent University standing. We simply ask for an alternative to Greek. And this means the abolition of Greek in those cases only in which its study is unprofitable and perfunctory. We are sometimes told that compulsory Greek must be maintained in the Universities, as being the chief nurseries of the Church. As if any intending clergyman need not learn Greek because its study is optionalised. We do not advocate the prohibition of Greek; but simply an alternative to it. Nor is there any danger of the Universities relapsing into eighteenth-century indifference to classical culture. We have passed since then through a literary revolution which has resulted in what may be considered a final comparative estimate of every literary type and epoch. However classical study may be modified by the cessation of much "painful" scholarship and useless mechanical composition, the works of Homer and Æschylus can never in the future become objects of mere antiquarian curiosity, but will always form an essential part of a complete literary culture. It is needless, however, to insist upon this. It would be a sufficient condemnation of our present classical training if a living and vital interest in classical study depended in any way upon its compulsory enforcement in University examinations; and if I were inclined to appeal to selfish motives I might suggest that the genuine scholar would gain something from a measure which would destroy a good deal of spurious reputation for learning based upon a mere smattering acquired in obedience to an unavoidable and arbitrary regulation.

We say, then, that university Greek is in numberless cases a mere sham, and does in no way ensure the literary culture rightly to be demanded of a University as a condition of all her honours. How the Cambridge Previous and the corresponding Oxford Examinations should be reformed so as to satisfy this demand involves a long consideration of details, which, however, I do not think of insuperable difficulty. I should mention that the University of Oxford enforcing Greek in two examinations, and thereby exacting a far higher degree of classical knowledge, has a better case to make out than the University of Cambridge, with whose ideal of specialised erudition universal Greek has become entirely inconsistent. If Cambridge is to keep Greek, let her raise the compulsory standard, and not, while maintaining it on a conviction of its usefulness, falsify that conviction by accepting a mere beggarly obol as the price of entrance into the university life beyond. But Cambridge cannot adopt any such reactionary course, the pressure of other subjects is too great, her recognition of them too generous and unconditioned. Let her then, while demanding of all her sons some culture of the heart and the imagination, consider whether that common and necessary culture is not possible without the compulsory study of a language so exacting, so difficult, so alien from the bent of countless minds, and so remote from many of the subjects which she herself recognises as worthy of a man's supreme devotion and her proudest honours.

MARKS AND EXAMINATIONS.

BY J. S. MILLS, M.A.

The system of assessing by marks has become so associated with all school teaching and discipline that the efficient working of a school without it can scarcely be imagined. At the same time there is hardly any point at which our public school system is more open to attack. Any expression of scepticism as to the necessity or desirability of marks is met by the answer that boys require a perpetual stimulus to work, and parents reliable information of their boys' progress and positions. This is the question, then, I wish briefly to discuss.

In the first place, I can conceive no possibility of modifying or improving our marking system. The more scientific and reliable it is made, the more difficult it is to work, and the more urgent a case we have against it. The writer has had experience of many systems, among others of one so perfect and scientific that the mere teaching of a class became quite a secondary consideration, the teacher's chief attention being devoted to the faithful application of the scheme and to admiration of its ingenuity. The handiest and perhaps the worst system is that by which at the termination of a lesson the lowest boy in a class say of twenty receives one mark, and the top boy twenty. The best way, perhaps, in spite of the difficulty of equalising the questions, is to assign one mark to each answer. One advantage of this system is that it avoids the confusion of a perpetual changing of seats. All systems, however, fair or unfair, scientific or unscientific, are open to many common objections. They all involve an additional burden and responsibility to a master who has or ought to have his hands sufficiently full with the discipline and teaching of his form. In the case of a modern language master with large forms and a whole school under his tuition, marking often exacts an immense expenditure of time. The supervision of the marks in each class, the subsequent work of addition and proportionalising, are such an additional tax on his energies as needs some justification in practical utility. But, we are told, boys must have some perpetual stimulus, some constant reminder and reward. As a teacher of some experience, I feel no keen indignation at this pessimistic view of a boy's interest and motive in his work. Boys are not distinguished for a love of learning for its own sake, and are certainly not averse to a bribe. But I wish to insist that in the marking system we are pandering unnecessarily to this fundamental aversion to education, and are perhaps fostering it. I am perpetually asked, "What was the use of doing this, if we are not to be marked for it?" Only the other day a colleague told me an amusing incident of this kind. He was in the middle of what he considered an interesting and valuable dissertation on the difference between the meanings of *quel que* and *quelque*, when he was suddenly interrupted by the delightfully irrelevant inquiry, "Please, sir, what is your system of marking in French composition?" The vicious motive

revealed by such a question is, of course, very obvious to us; but I think it does represent a real damage constantly inflicted upon the spirit and interest of school-work. But, apart from the perpetual suggestion of a wrong motive, I have some doubt of the advantage of these recurring form-lists based upon marks. I am not sure that a boy who is at the top of his form, it may be from natural sharpness, should always be confronted with the visible proclamation of his superiority; and I am sure that many an industrious boy whose work contains more moral merit than that of a far less industrious but naturally sharper boy, suffers a good deal of needless discouragement by always seeing his name in the inglorious fag-end of an order of merit. Marks are given for actual performance oral and written, with no reference to the amount of determination and industry with which the work has been achieved.

But this insistence upon marks as the inevitable accompaniment of teaching has also a cramping and narrowing influence upon the teacher himself, as it impels him to such subjects and such treatment of subjects of school study only as can be assessed by marks and examination. The prejudice accounts to some extent for the fewness of the hours devoted to the reading of history or literature in forms without any reference to future catechism but with the simple object of widening and refining the mind and familiarising it with the classical works of our own language. It also accounts for that flood of over-annotated editions; that "poor ha'porth" of Scott or Shakespeare, "with the intolerable deal" of introduction and notes that laborious and ponderous treatment of English poetry which might be left for its appreciation and understanding to the sympathies of young English hearts. But how convenient those notes are for home-work, for sharp-shooting of question and answer in form! And, above all, what beautiful examination-papers they make! And yet I am sure they are to some extent responsible for the fact that, like Lord Harvey in Pope's satire, many of us "hate whate'er we read at school."

I have, then, a serious indictment against the marking system in its constant suggestion to boys of a mercenary motive, the perpetual accentuation of the differences between boys' natural aptitudes, the immense expenditure of time it involves, and in its cramping and narrowing influence upon the actual spirit and method of teaching.

The case of examinations, however, seems to me to stand upon quite a different footing. I can of course appreciate the objections to an unenlightened and over-specialised examination, to such a paper of questions as I once saw on "Hamlet," which seemed to have been set with the object so well described as that of "displaying the erudition of the examiner" rather than with any desire to elicit from the examined some proof of a general and fruitful appreciation of the play. Such a paper of course no teacher of any capacity—I almost said of any sense of humour—would ever think of setting. But I cannot understand the strong current of feeling which seems to have started against examinations in general. Far from agreeing with such an attitude, I am convinced that the use of examination on enlightened principles should be rather extended than discouraged, and do away to some extent with the necessity of continuous "marking." An examination once a fortnight, fairly representative of the fortnight's work in the various subjects, and set with a view rather to ascertain the amount of progress made than to the production of an "order of merit," would, I am sure, be a quite sufficient check upon idleness and stagnation, and I think a sufficient stimulus to industry. Examinations of course need a reform in many ways. I will do no more than allude to one direction in which I think reform might proceed. It is customary in many schools to concentrate especial attention with a view to a distant examination upon a carefully restricted amount of translation, classical or modern—to work the passage up to a very high perfection in every detail. This course seems to me, especially in modern languages, a mistake. Two pages of German prose read carefully are better for purposes of facility in translation than one page prepared with the special concentration I have mentioned. And the examination, it seems to me, should take the form rather of a piece of "sight-translation" representing the average difficulty of the prepared work. The test is, in this case, applied to progress in powers of translation and not to a knowledge, which may be crammed, of a prescribed passage. These criticisms are, of course, inapplicable to forms of very young boys, who have to be dealt with on distinct and different methods. But in the case of all other forms, and generally in literary examinations of all kinds, facility in translation should always be tested rather than ability to translate from books specially set.

With many necessary reforms, then, I maintain that examinations may be used as a practical and sufficient substitute for the pernicious system of marking. I am for the entire abolition of marks in the interests both of teacher and taught. Surely as the science of education advances, as knowledge is made easier and more attractive, and (shall I add?) as a system of registration ensures the intellectual and spiritual qualifications of teachers, the necessity for these artificial incentives will disappear. And may we not claim to have made already sufficient progress in most of these directions to justify us in now casting aside "marks" as a cumbrous and obsolete part of our scholastic machinery?

DISAPPOINTED MOTHERS.

BY ALICE POWELL.

There are many half-acknowledged facts in the world; and because their existence is more implied than asserted, it is not to be inferred that those facts do not exist.

That the majority of parents, particularly mothers, are more or less disappointed in their children, who grow up differently (not necessarily badly) from what they expected, is a fact, and one to be regretted.

Setting aside vicious qualities, and supposing ordinary virtues and amiability in mother and child, what is the cause of this widespread lack of sympathy between the two? On physical grounds it seems natural that there should be more of the mother than of the father in the child; and as the mother has, in ninety cases out of a hundred, the entire management of the children, is it not strange that she is commonly the first to lose touch with them?

One cause of this feeling of disappointment—unexpressed often, it is true—is that parents (and here again it is more usually the mother's weakness) have an inordinate longing to see their children like themselves. Nothing seems to delight them more than to be told how much John or Mary resembles them. Is not this desire, that their children should be copies of themselves, both conceited and narrow-minded? The world would become more prosaic than it is were each successive generation to be but a reproduction of the one that went before it.

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new," and parents who cannot move with the times must be contented to be left behind, and should not make themselves unhappy because their children have interests apart from theirs.

As mothers have the future of their children in their own hands, they must, in some measure, be answerable for the disaffection which distresses them later. Much of this is due to